

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5, 2003

Contact:

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WASHINGTON - U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Vice Chair Nina Shea will join Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) at a press conference today on Capitol Hill to call on Vietnam to cease its latest assault on human rights and religious freedom. Reps. Lofgren, Sanchez and Smith will unveil H.Res. 427, a resolution introduced by the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam (CCV), which acknowledges the leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the urgent need for religious freedom and related human rights in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

H. Res. 427 cites the Commission's latest report on Vietnam which urges that Vietnam be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for "egregious, systematic and ongoing abuses of religious freedom." The Resolution also specifically advocates that the "Congress and the executive branch implement the recommendations of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom."

"The passage of H. Res. 427 will send another clear message to the Vietnamese government that better relations between our two countries will only be achieved when there are notable improvements in human rights," said Shea.

**WHAT:** Press Conference on the Vietnamese Government's Recent Crackdown on Religious Freedom

**WHEN:** Wednesday, November 5, 2003, 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** 121 Cannon House Office Building

**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

- Dean Michael K. Young ,
- Felice D. Gaer ,